



MISSOURI DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION

Outdoor Classroom Grant 2007–2008

PURPOSE

The Missouri Department of Conservation is pleased to offer an *Outdoor Classroom Grant* to Missouri educators. This grant program, funded by the Missouri Department of Conservation and the Missouri Heritage Foundation, is designed to distribute funds in amounts up to **\$1,000** to public, private or parochial schools interested in developing or enhancing an outdoor learning site, either on school grounds or at a nearby location.

The purpose of this program is to promote interdisciplinary, hands-on instruction through conservation education in the out-of-doors. In addition, this program is intended to encourage awareness, appreciation, knowledge and active conservation of natural resources, including native vegetation, wildlife and wildlife habitat.

ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

Any pre-kindergarten–12 public, private or parochial school or district in the state of Missouri may apply. Schools are limited to submitting one application per school year.

ELIGIBLE COSTS

Grant funds can be used for materials needed to create or improve an outdoor classroom site. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Native plants including trees, shrubs, flowers, grasses and seeds
- Materials for the development of a pond or wetland habitat
- Materials for the development of a butterfly or hummingbird habitat
- Wildlife feeders and shelters
- Instructional materials including compasses, magnifying glasses, butterfly nets, etc.
- Interpretive signage
- Trail surfacing materials
- Soil and soil amendments

MAXIMUM GRANT AMOUNT

The maximum grant request is **\$1,000** per application. A **20 percent match** is required. Eligible matching funds include cash, materials and labor. The contribution of donated materials is estimated at the market value of the materials at the time of donation. The value of donated labor should be calculated using the minimum-wage rate

per hour. Labor provided by staff and students during regular school hours does not qualify for donated labor. Donated use of equipment should be calculated at the rate for “similar work,” excluding fringe benefits and overhead.

APPLICATION PROCESS

A **site visit** by the local Missouri Department of Conservation education consultant is required **prior** to submitting an application. Ideally this site visit should occur in the early planning stages. During this site visit the education consultant will help identify learning objectives and curriculum connections for the outdoor classroom as well as provide technical advice for site development and plant selection. It is the responsibility of the applicant to schedule the site visit with the conservation education consultant. This site visit shall take place no later than **March 2, 2007**.

Submit completed grant applications to the Missouri Department of Conservation. Applications shall be postmarked on or before **March 16, 2007**. Any application postmarked after this date is ineligible. Applicants will be notified in writing by **April 16, 2007**, whether their proposal has been funded. Grant recipients will receive a project agreement for review and signature prior to each project's official start. Funded projects need to be completed no later than **May 9, 2008**.

SELECTION PROCESS

A committee of professionals trained in grant review and conservation education will review all applications and make awards according to the following criteria:

1. Completeness of the project information, conformity to application requirements, soundness of budget and relevance to the purpose of the *Outdoor Classroom Grant* program
2. Demonstrated opportunity for interdisciplinary and hands-on conservation education
3. Student involvement in planning, design, implementation and maintenance of the site
4. Community and diverse staff involvement in planning, design, implementation and maintenance of the site
5. Soundness of plan for long-term use and maintenance
6. Clearly defined project implementation stages.

FUND DISTRIBUTION

Approved applications will receive **50 percent** of their grant award following submission of a signed cooperative agreement to the Missouri Department of Conservation. The remaining **50 percent** will be reimbursed after the project is completed and upon submission of a final grant report of actual expenses. **All approved grant funds must be expended prior to submission of the final report.** In order for grant expenses to be eligible, they must be approved in the grant application, incurred within the project period and submitted with proper supporting documentation with the final grant report. The final grant report is due no later than **May 19, 2008**.

The final reimbursement for actual, approved project expenses will be made after all documentation has been deemed accurate and complete.

ACCOUNTING AND FISCAL TRACKING

1. Funds must be deposited in a bank account and not commingled with other funds. Interest earned on funds must be used on the project.
2. Grantees shall keep financial records for each grant in accordance with applicable government accounting standards. These records, as public records, shall be subject to inspection by the Missouri Department of Conservation and the state auditor during regular business hours throughout the grant period and for three years after the grant period ends. If any litigation, claim or audit is begun before the end of the three years, the records shall be retained until such proceeding is resolved.
3. In the case of default by the grantee, the grant will be revoked and all unused or misused funds shall be returned to the grant program. The Department of Conservation will notify the grantee of default in writing. Grantees will be responsible for all debts incurred that are unauthorized under terms of the project.
4. All unused grant funds and interest shall be returned to the grant program.
5. The grantee is responsible for completing the project as proposed.
6. The grantee is responsible for ensuring that the Missouri Department of Conservation receives copies of the audit report for any audit performed during the grant period or the following three years.
7. Any equipment purchased with funds from this grant becomes the property of the grantee.

SITE VISIT REQUIREMENTS

Three site visits by the local Missouri Department of Conservation education consultant are required. The outdoor classroom project coordinator is responsible for scheduling site visits. The first site visit shall occur prior to a grant application's submission and no later than **March 2, 2007**. Mid-way through the project a second site visit shall occur. A final site visit shall take place when the project is completed and prior to submitting the final grant report. The final grant report is due no later than **May 19, 2008**.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT REQUIREMENTS

At a minimum, grantees are required to have members of the outdoor classroom planning committee and 30 percent of the school's teachers participate in three (3) hours of professional development. The local Missouri Department of Conservation education consultant will work with the project coordinator and school administrator to design professional development that will integrate the outdoor classroom into the school curriculum.

REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

Grantees will be required to provide the Missouri Department of Conservation with an interim and final report. The interim progress report shall be produced by the project coordinator and submitted by no later than **November 9, 2007**. The final report shall be compiled by the project coordinator and submitted to the Missouri Department of Conservation by no later than **May 19, 2008**.

The interim progress report shall contain a brief description of the status of the project, an anticipated schedule for completing the project, and a budget summary of grant funds and matching funds that have been expended to date.

The final report shall contain a reflective narrative, an instructional activity to be used in the outdoor classroom, a financial report comparing estimated grant and matching expenditures with actual grant and matching expenditures, and an actual expenditure summary. The report must also include legible copies of itemized, detailed receipts or invoices with clear explanations for all expenditures paid from grant funds. Itemized time sheets for donated services and legible copies of itemized, detailed receipts or invoices with clear explanations for donated materials shall also be included.

CREDIT REQUIREMENTS

Schools are encouraged to publicize grant awards. The credit line should read: The *Outdoor Classroom Grant* is made possible by the Missouri Department of Conservation and the Missouri Conservation Heritage Foundation.

GRANT APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS

Please respond to the Project Description statements, numbers 1–7, using the following guidelines:

- A response must be provided for each of the numbered statements 1–7.
- Align the number and statement with each response.
- Use no more than six single-sided or three double-sided sheets of 8 1/2-by-11-inch paper for responses.

Note: The review criteria include conformity to the application requirements.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

1. Indicate **total grant** amount you are requesting.
2. Describe the specific project you are seeking funds for and show how it will be used to promote interdisciplinary, hands-on instruction through conservation education. **The items for which you are requesting grant funds need to be justified in your project description.**
3. Describe how students are involved in the planning, design, implementation and maintenance of the outdoor classroom.
4. List the participants (school staff, organizations, community members, etc.) involved in the project and describe their respective roles.
5. Indicate how maintenance of the outdoor classroom will be sustained over time, including summer maintenance.
6. Identify who owns the project site. If it is not owned by the school, provide a signed statement from the property owner granting permission for the project to be conducted and stating the length of time students will be able to use and maintain the property after the work is completed.
7. Define the stages for implementing the project. Include a detailed time frame, specific actions and confirmed participants. (SEE SAMPLE)

SITE MAP

Submit a current map of the area on one side of a sheet of paper no larger than 11 by 17 inches. Using correct directional orientation, identify the school building, existing significant landscape features and proposed changes. Clearly mark which features are existing as “existing” and proposed features as “proposed.” Include site dimensions. Provide a brief description of the sun, soil and moisture conditions of the site.

Submit two photographs of the outdoor classroom site. Provide a brief orientation description for each photograph.

SPECIES LIST

Include a list of all plant species that will be added to the outdoor classroom site. The Department of Conservation strongly encourages the use of native plants. Useful information on native plants can be found at

www.grownative.org. Existing plants do not need to be included. Common plant names are acceptable.

BUDGET

Provide a budget summary and an itemized budget detailing expenses for the project (SEE SAMPLE). **The items for which you are requesting grant funds need to be justified in your project description.**

Budget information should be contained on no more than two single-sided or one double-sided sheet of 8 1/2-by-11-inch paper. Costs associated with professional development, such as workshop and registration fees or substitute pay, are not eligible expenditures for grant funds, but can be used as matching funds.

The **itemized budget** should be formatted according to the sample table and should clearly state:

1. Project component
2. Supplier
3. Actual or estimated costs from intended suppliers
4. Specific items to be paid for by Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC) grant funds.
5. Specific items to be paid for by matching funds
6. Source of the matching funds.

The **budget summary** should be formatted according to the sample table and should state clearly:

1. The total dollar amount requested from MDC for each category
2. The total amount of matching funds for each category
3. Totals for each category.

APPLICATION CHECKLIST

To meet the grant requirements make sure all of the following items are included in your application. The review criteria include conformity to the application requirements.

- Postmark of **March 16, 2007** or earlier.
- Completed Application Cover Page with required signatures of your Missouri Department of Conservation education consultant, project coordinator, lead groundskeeper and an authorized school administrator
- Answers to application questions numbered 1–7 contained on no more than six single-sided or three double-sided sheets of 8 1/2-by-11-inch paper
- A site map on a single sheet of paper no larger than 11 by 17 inches
- Two photographs of the outdoor classroom site
- A detailed and summarized budget on no more than two single-sided or one double-sided sheet of 8 1/2-by-11-inch paper
- Permission letter from landowner if property on which project is located is **not** owned by the school or district (application question number 6)
- A plant species list.

IMPORTANT DATES

| To occur on or before: | |
|--|---|
| March 2, 2007 | Initial site visit with a Missouri Department of Conservation education consultant. |
| March 16, 2007 | Completed grant applications must be postmarked. |
| April 16, 2007 | Applicants will be notified in writing whether their proposal will be awarded. |
| April 30, 2007 | Signed and completed Cooperative Agreement submitted by the grantee to the Missouri Department of Conservation. |
| Following submission of the signed and completed Cooperative Agreement | Approved applicants will receive 50 percent of their grant award. |
| November 9, 2007 | Progress reports need to be submitted by the project coordinator. |
| May 9, 2008 | Funded projects need to be completed. Final site visit with a Missouri Department of conservation education Consultant. |
| May 19, 2008 | Final grant reports need to be submitted by the project coordinator. |
| Following approval of final report | Remaining 50 percent of grant award is distributed. |

Application Submission

Submit the original and five copies of each of the items listed in the application check list to the address listed below. FAXED and/or electronic copies will not be accepted.

Outdoor Classroom Grants
Outreach and Education Division
Missouri Department of Conservation
P.O. Box 180
Jefferson City, MO 65102-0180

For more information contact:

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